



Frank Brothers

Born: Oct. 24, 1946 in New Orleans, La.

Resident: Louisville, Ky.

Family: Donna (wife).

Frank Brothers' record at Keeneland

Total wins: 130

Stakes Wins (11)

- Saddled a record 14 winners to win the 1999 Keeneland spring title.
- Won the 1991 Preakness and Belmont with Eclipse Award winner Hansel.
- Won the Toyota Blue Grass Stakes (G1) in 1997 with Pulpit.
- Won the 2004 Ashland Stakes (G1) with Madcap Escapade.
- Received the inaugural Outstanding Thoroughbred Trainer Award from the United Thoroughbred Trainers of America in 1991.
- Topped all trainers at Louisiana Downs for nine straight years (1980-1988).
- Between 1977-1988, he topped the standings at Fair Grounds six times and was the runner-up five times.
- Was inducted into the Fair Grounds Hall of Fame in 1991.
- Leading trainer at Churchill Downs in the spring of 1979.
- Wife Donna, a former jockey, is a racing analyst and television commentator.

Frank Brothers had a pair of 2-year-old stakes winners in his barn last year—Passport, who captured the Miller Lite Cradle Stakes, and Bel Air Beauty, who won the Darley Alcibiades Stakes (G2).

He also won the Fountain of Youth Stakes (G2) with Bruce Lunsford's First Samurai and the John Battaglia Memorial Stakes with Claiborne Farm's Laity.

Through Jan. 7, 2007, Brothers had won 2,249 races and his runners had earned \$46,657,970, according to Equineline.com, which credits him with 122 stakes winners.

First Samurai, who began last year as a leading Triple Crown prospect, was retired in July and now stands at Claiborne. At 2, he had won the Hopeful Stakes (G1) and the Champagne Stakes (G1) and suffered his first career loss in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile.

In 2004, he trained the very fast filly Madcap Escapade, who won the Old Hat Stakes, the Stonerside Forward Gal (G2) and the Ashland before a hip injury forced her to the sidelines. She was also owned by Lunsford.

In January of 2005, Brothers reported that Madcap Escapade had rejoined him at the track. "She's doing well and is about a month away from racing." At the time, his public stable was housed at Gulfstream Park.

Before her retirement in mid-2005, she added three graded stakes wins, including the Vinery Madison (G3), which provided Brothers with his 10th career stakes victory at Keeneland.

"She was a horse of a lifetime," Brothers told *Daily Racing Form*. "As good as it gets in her category."

Another 2-year-old stakes winner in his shedrow in 2005 was Miller Lite Cradle Stakes winner Laity, owned by Claiborne Farm. For the year, his stable won 25 of 102 starts and earned \$1,821,624.

Brothers has been best known as the trainer of Lazy Lane Farms' 1991 Eclipse Award-winning 3-year-old Hansel, who won

two legs of the Triple Crown.

In the fall of 2001, he became the semi-private trainer for Joe Allbritton's Lazy Lane Farms, in a move that might have enabled lightning to strike twice with their renewed association, though he returned to having a public operation. In 2003, he saddled Lazy Lane's Covering Ground to win the John D. Marsh Stakes at Colonial Downs.

Brothers, the oldest of three sons of a New Orleans electrical contractor, went to the races as a young boy on weekends with his parents and showed Quarter Horses.

"I began riding in the sixth grade," he said. "My brothers were the athletes after we got to high school. I spent my afternoons showing and riding Quarter Horses. We kept them at a public stable in the city."

Some of the horses he showed were national-caliber performers. "I was a city boy trying to play a country boy's game," he said. "I spent more time at horse shows than I did at school. We'd leave on Wednesday, show on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and then come home."

He attended the University of Southern Mississippi for two years. "All I ever really liked was messing with horses," he said.

"I liked the horses, but there wasn't too much money in show horses, so I went to the racetrack. Jack Van Berg was always one of the leading trainers in New Orleans and in the nation, so I thought if I was going to do it, I might as well go with the best."

Van Berg's response when approached: "You look like a clean-cut kid. There's a shank. You can walk some horses for me."

While with Van Berg, Brothers worked at virtually every job in the stable. He took out his trainer's license in 1972 and ran a division of Van Berg's stable in various parts of the country. It was no 9-to-5 job. "When I went to work, it was dark. When I left, it was dark."

He remained with Van Berg for about 10 years. "I've got all the respect in the world

for him. He was my mentor and was more of a father to me in a lot of ways. I had a lot of hell in me when I started out, but he worked it out of me. I didn't have much time to fool around. He gave me all the barbed wire I could eat."

After leaving Van Berg, Brothers opened up a public stable and raced primarily in Louisiana and at Oaklawn Park in Arkansas. His stable averaged 75 horses with as many as 100 at one time. His first stakes winner was Regal Rumor, who won the 1977 Pink Platinum Handicap at Sportsman's Park.

Brothers then became the private trainer for Lazy Lane during which time he developed Hansel.

Allbritton had purchased Hansel for \$150,000 at Keeneland's 1989 September yearling sale. Brothers remembers him as a "big, grand-looking colt. I happened to see him at a farm earlier in the summer when we were looking at summer-sale horses, and, of course, he wasn't all spit and polish, and I said to myself then, 'I'll buy that colt—because he just looked like a runner.'

"And when I saw him in the fall, I even liked him more. Some of them go the other way, but he came the right way and I was really impressed with him."

Hansel won the Lexington Stakes at Keeneland in his final Derby prep. He finished 10th in the Derby as the favorite but rebounded to win both the Preakness and Belmont.

He next began a fruitful relationship with the Hancock family's Claiborne Farm in 1996. The following year, Brothers returned to the Derby trail with Claiborne's Pulpit. Already the winner of the Fountain of Youth and runner-up in the Florida Derby, Pulpit won the Blue Grass, but an injury compromised his Derby effort and he was retired.

"It was really sad to see him go," Brothers said. "I think he was as talented as any horse I've ever had. He just never got a chance to show all the things he could do."

In 2000, Brothers won the Louisiana Derby (G2) with Mighty, owned by Claiborne and Adele Dilschneider, but an injury kept him from making the Derby. Another prominent horse that year was dual Grade 2 winner Conserve. The following year, he won graded races with Watch and with Trip.

At the time Claiborne president Seth Hancock announced he had hired Brothers, he gave as his reasons that Brothers was "good with 2-year-olds, has trained a classic winner and is also good with fillies. Also, he's a very hard worker and a class person."

Brothers divides his year between Gulfstream Park and Churchill, with a string of horses going to New York for the Saratoga meet.

His wife, former jockey Donna Barton, has galloped and breezed horses for Brothers. "She's a luxury to have at the barn," he said. "That's when she isn't working for NBC, or Churchill Downs or TVG, though." Her work as a racing analyst and TV commentator keeps her pretty busy these days.